

# Port Orford Free Press

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*A Publication of Citizens For A Free Port Orford*

## Boots on the ground “Hands in the Air!”

Welcome to Port Orford, the town where “anything goes” at City Hall. At the last City Council meeting the City Admin announced – We’ve got a new (interim) Police Chief a’comin’.. “Boots on the Ground, Monday!, ... December 1<sup>st</sup>”.

Unfortunately for us, most of the councilors were not aware this was happening, and quite surprised by the statement, and little over a week’s notice before the invasion - “boots on the ground”.

The facts as best could be determined:

There has been **no formal vetting process** for this individual by the council.

There was **no attempt to advertise** this vacancy by the city admin.

There has been **no written evidence** presented to the council of the vetting (background check) and **recommendation from the former chief** for the admin to have based this hiring on.

In addition, this candidate chosen for our most trusted of positions – our Chief of Police – comes to us with a checkered history, that will require extensive vetting for us to feel comfortable. There are questions about his time in the City of Gold Hill Police, and the fact that the **department was disbanded in 2007** by the city because their liability insurer threatened to cancel over issues involving the police. Plus there appears to be some alleged inappropriate activity from 2011 in Butte Falls. Our own, not too distant past, experience with an out of control police department should make us leery of going down that path ever again.

Some questions left unanswered:

**On who’s authority** did the admin hire this person without the council’s prior approval, as required for department heads?

**What kind of terms**, guarantees, commitments, etc were granted by the admin in the negotiations to get him here in such a short time.

**Will our liability insurer** consider this choice to high a risk for them too? [Ed. maybe the admin was aware and made sure it

was not the same?]

Prepare to be attacked.

We’ve got “Boots on the ground” – “Hands in the air!! Port Orford”

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**GOLD HILL** – A candidate withdrew from the city’s mayoral race Wednesday, saying he had become a **target of police harassment**. (Oct 19, 2006 *Rouge City Media, Mail Tribune article*)

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## City Council Meeting

- staff reporter

The City Council met Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup>, with about 20 citizens in attendance. Council President Pogwizd immediately spoke up to address the fact that with resignation of Councilor McArdle and continuous lack of attendance by Councilor Schofield, there are now two, open/empty council seats. It was added to new business.

## Citizens Concerns

Council Elect **Brett Webb** wanted to express his support for Beverly Bacak’s appointment to the Historic Preservation Committee.

## Departmental Reports

**Admin** – Councilor Clancy asked about the statement “Alternatives for financing are presented”, and what this is referring to? The Admin stated it was from the OSHA report and that raising rates to the statewide average would help. Councilor Clancy stated “we should not be comparing ourselves to Salem and Portland!”..the admin back peddled and stated it was the opinion of OSHA, Caroline added that “The engineer stated the way we charge already meets the standard”. The mayor chimed in to blubber about his favorite – the ‘one-shot’ funding meeting, and all his previous failures to implement his plan “and things” with bonds and heavy-handed rate increases. Councilor Billings asked “how bad are the meters?”, the admin stated “about half need to be replaced”. The admin then mentioned AMR meters – electronic meters that send a radio signal to be read by the city as they drive by. [Ed – these meters cost considerably more, and are highly prone to various failures (batteries) not present with the standard

mechanical human read meters – we don’t need this kind of “improvement”]

**Finance** – Councilor Clancy had several questions about various checks that were not properly detailed, including a check to Dell Computers for \$1700, and checks to pay for lift station repairs at the port. [Ed. – note, ‘11% Dave’ was again not present for the meeting to answer any questions, although he was seen in the building during the meeting]

**Police** – Officer Chris Hansen gave the report stating they were reviewing policies and procedures, petty theft is down, personal crimes were up. The admin then jumped in to say that (much to the majority of the councilor’s surprise) a new interim police chief would be arriving “boots on the ground” Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. He is Hank Hobart from Butte Falls – where Officer Hansen came from, and he received great accolades from Hansen saying “he is the most honest guy you could ever meet”. Councilor Billings stated he had met with Hobart and “he looks like a good fit”.

**Planning** – no reported offered.

**Mayor** – The mayor took this opportunity to pontificate on his past jaunts to various meetings. Councilor Clancy asked about the City Admin performance review, and specifically why the council was not involved in the process? The mayor said ‘next time’. Clancy then asked if in the response to the ‘if I were mayor’ contest, did the kids again mention the lack of things for them to do in this town?

## Liaison Reports

**Schools** – Board is working on providing computer notepads for the students, and discussed the high school as a location during a Tsunami emergency. Also the shop class has made a beautiful myrtle wood canoe that is now on display at the school.

**Chamber** – Building membership, running some tourism ads.

**Fire** – Now have 12 volunteers, need more – must be age 16. A ‘Burn to Learn’ house burning at Hensley Hill Rd was discussed for December. (However, the PORFD had not previously asked for the approval now required by the burn ordinance, As such, the request was put on next month’s agenda.)

**Parks** – Working on a

maintenance plan for the skate bowl and park.

**Watershed** – With McArdle's resignation, Councilor Billings will be future liaison.

**Port** – Councilor Elect (and Port Commissioner) Brett Webb offered to fill in and report that Port operations are about back to normal after the October 25<sup>th</sup> storm damage. Changes are being implemented to allow for still better drainage, Griff's restaurant should be back by the first – there were 12 employees at the restaurant that have been hard hit by the closing, and they are working to help them during this hardship.

**County** – no show.

**Old Business** – none

#### **New Business**

**Ordinance 2015-04 Reporting Requirement for 1/7<sup>th</sup> of TLT Funds** – First Reading.

Councilor Billings asked that it be clear that the reports should go to the City Admin to avoid the mixups created in the past when the Finance Director was involved. Council President Pogwizd requested that verbiage be included to clarify that the funds be “used specifically to promote Port Orford.” The attorney was asked to review and verify.

**Historic Preservation Committee Appointment of Beverly Bacak**

Council President Pogwizd motioned to accept, Billings 2<sup>nd</sup> – passed 4/0

Councilor Clancy asked “Why are we appointing to this committee? – what does it have to do with the city? We've never had a report..?” The mayor said their current project is to get the Lindberg house onto the National Register. Councilor MacLeod suggested “it might be good if they came in so we can see what they are up to.” At this point the mayor invited his wife, Karen, to speak, as she is one of the committee members he has previously appointed. She began by with last year's project, funded by a Local Government Grant to get the paperwork together for the Lindberg house and a list of houses built by Mr. Lindberg. Councilor

MacLeod asked “Do you use volunteers?”, “No, just board members”. MacLeod, “Pat Rice has requested to be on the committee”, “...perhaps after she heals”. The committee is slated to meet monthly for the foreseeable future.

#### **Council Seat Vacancy**

The mayor began, “Councilor McArdle has resigned, and we are advertising now for a replacement.” Councilor Billings stated “We do not need to wait – lets fill it now”. Council President Pogwizd said he “was tired of looking across at that empty seat for over a year. Finch was the runner up, we should appoint him”. Councilors MacLeod and Clancy both agreed. As the mayor stammered, Councilor Clancy made the request that it be put on the next month's agenda.

**Consent Calendar** – approved, 4/0.

**Continuing Action** – Leash law being considered at Parks Commission – still.

#### **Citizens Considerations**

**Gary Wickham** expressed a need for a simple leash law before summer tourists arrive. **Teresa Kolibaba** had two complaints against proposed councilor replacement Milton Finch – that he is disrespectful and turns his back when she speaks to him, and previously when he was councilor he blocked a \$45K free improvement to the horse arena at Buffington Park. “Finch has not been a good influence in town”.

**Jack Pruitt** wanted to know what ever happened to the City taking over Coast Guard Hill Rd along with the deal on the Battle Rock Property? Council President Pogwizd stated “we need at least a 20yr maintenance agreement to take over this street.”

**Wayne Landon** wanted to know why “we have to wait to fill this council seat?” **Dave Duncan** stated “PORFD intends to do a 'Burn to Learn' exercise at lower Hensley Hill, using smoke machines for training, with an actual burn on a weekday before Christmas.

Council President Pogwizd stated “We need to give you approval for that, we have an ordinance in place.” The mayor commented he has it on the agenda for next month. Councilor Elect **Brett Webb** stated we need to exercise caution entertaining a new police chief with our history in this town. Councilor MacLeod asked where this guy was from? Brett suggested

a 90 second google search found where the City of Gold Hill was forced to disband its police department due to abusive actions by the department. [Ed. Mr. Hobart was a member of that failed department]. This is a big decision for our town – caution is warranted.

#### **Staff Considerations**

**Councilor MacLeod** asked about the cleanup of the slash/burn piles on 20<sup>th</sup>. The admin responded that “they were supposed to be, but seem to be purposely delaying it”, and suggested perhaps it was time for fines. Council President Pogwizd mentioned the active nuisance complaint. Councilor Clancy asked when the letter would go out, the admin stated “tomorrow”. Dolores Mayea asked to speak, as the original property seller, for the current property owner, Mr. Murdoch. When he originally bought the property he thought he could burn, now the new ordinance has passed. **Councilor Billings**, “Best wishes” for McArdle. **Councilor Clancy** wished us all a “Happy Turkey Day!”.

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### **– Notice –**

#### **Executive Council Meeting**

**To “discuss” hiring of a new Interim Police Chief**

**Monday 3:00 PM**  
**City Hall**

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Recently, there has been a constant pressure from the Federal Government to militarize our local police forces. This has been done with specialized 'crowd control' training as well as the gift of high tech military grade weapons to be used by local city police forces.

As free citizens it is in our best interests to resist such paramilitary operation in our own cities. This includes the careful scrutiny of those we allow to take control of our police, and make very sure they are above reproach. We must be very sure these individuals will not use this force either for their own agenda, or against us as free citizens.

***We must be very careful here.***

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**Just Say NO!! to Hank 'the Spank'**

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#### **Notice**

All submissions to the *Port Orford Free Press* must be made by email, in text only format – all other forms will be rejected.

Email submissions to:

PortOrfordFreePress@gmail.com